



Ideas for Celebrations

contributed by Sandy Roberts
former director, Rainbow Express Preschool, Lansdale, Pennsylvania

Mr. Charlie Day. Mr. Charlie is our school custodian; the children have a great rapport with him — and the feeling is mutual. Once a year we celebrate a special day just for him. Each class prepares a special gift and we make a special presentation to him. Some gifts have been songs; mugs with a class picture on it; coupons for the children to empty trash, clean a room, vacuum, wash windows; a chocolate cake (his favorite) baked by the children; goodie bags full of personalized (by the children) towels, rags, mop handles.

Special Days. Hat Day, Pig Tail Day, Color Day, Dress-Up Day, Backwards Day, Pet Day (alive or stuffed), Circus Day — All class activities support the theme. For Circus Day, each class prepares a special act, and the classes rotate to participate. The videotape is running, and in the afternoon the tape is shown as a special movie.

Season Celebrations. Spring and winter concerts are done with each class participating in the show with songs or dramas that the children have been doing in their classes. For winter, a winter picnic, ice buildings, snowmen building. For spring, planting spring plants, starting a vegetable garden.

Famous Inventors. Celebrate the inventors of our everyday items such as the inventor of the safety pin, zipper, computer, telephone, glue or paste, pencils, crayons, paper, various toys, the bicycle, hole punch, typewriter, etc. — items that children take for granted and use every day. This is a great time for the children to develop their own inventions.

Kids Cooking. What is the recipe for cooking green beans, or pizza, or cake? We write the children's responses, ask for the steps, cooking temperatures, and time for cooking. Classes switch the written and illustrated recipes with

each other and prepare a few favorite dishes. The cookbook can be given to parents.

Special Birthdays. Inventors, authors, president, center director, local government people, the mail carrier. Send birthday cards, pictures of the class, bake a cake.

Author Day. You can do so much with this idea. Many children's authors now have videos of how they write and illustrate their books. You can get or make puppets of the characters in the books, write letters to authors, write a similar book with the children. The room can be decorated with illustrations of the books, words from the books, special book covers.

Project Completion Celebrations. We worked long and hard to earn money for a new playground. When the new playground was complete, we deserved a party! Special celebrations are a great way to say thank you for all the hard work of others. Of course, the playground party was held at the top of the climber and on the new equipment. Even the newspaper was there for the celebration.

Special Thank-You Celebrations. Throughout the year, staff and children come into contact with a lot of people, groups, parents that need to be thanked. At the end of the year, we have a super celebration for all those wonderful people. Invitations are written up, signs and decorations are made, speeches are prepared, and special "Honorary Doctors of Early Childhood" diplomas are made. The children are the folks in charge and run the awards ceremony. The results are a lot of fun and thank-yous are complete for the year.

Teddy Bear Picnic and Teddy Bears on Parade. Any stuffed animal will do. After learning about animals, celebrate with the children and their

*A young child's joy in
discovery, learning, and
finding something out for the
first time is, in fact,
the ultimate celebration!*
— Francis Wardle

animals. Plan to pack lunches that the animals will like (and that the children will actually eat). Dress up the animals and have a parade to a special area for a picnic.

Week of the Young Child. We really go all out to celebrate the young child — active team participation, class, and full staff involvement in daily activities wrapped around a general theme. This year it was Disney — movie-a-day theme. For Cinderella, all the staff and children got very dressed up and we went to a ball. We had ballroom dancing with a mirror ball and evening gowns and fancy music and great lighting! One day was the Disney Olympics with Mickey and Minnie in charge — opening ceremonies and all. The following days were full of movie themes and celebrations — book fair, pizza dinner, a special concert, a family picnic, and buttons for the parents to wear to work stating they were celebrating Week of the Young Child!

These are some ideas I've tried. They all have worked out great! To celebrate milestones for the children, we send special notes home and the class joins in on cheers and encouragement of the milestone. When a child takes his first step at the center and mom or dad isn't there, we just tell them to watch their child because we think the first step is soon. Some milestones we want the parents to discover before we do!

More Ideas

from Sandra Monahu, director,
First Care of Wheaton, Illinois

Our plan is very simple . . . if it moves, we will celebrate it! Over the years we have celebrated many things:

- M&M's birthday
- Potty parties — to celebrate "no more diapers"
- Naturalization party — We have always had a naturalization party for our children when they become a citizen. Recently, one of my teachers, Heena Vasavada, became a citizen — we had a party for her. In return, she taught the four year olds about her countries — India and Africa. The ideas she shared transformed every aspect of our environment and learning.